

Office of Professional Accountability (OPA) Commendations & Complaints Report November 2003

Commendations:

Commendations Received in November: 100

Commendations Received to Date: 791

Rank	Summary
(1) Detective	A thank you was received for a Detective's assistance with an investigation. The Detective's efforts resulted in the case being solved in a timely manner.
(1) Sergeant (1) Officer	Thanks were received for SPD members that provided "driving under the influence" information at the 2003 Judicial DUI Forum. The expert protocol was well received by the attendees.
(1) Officer	An officer provided assistance to a troubled high school aged girl. The officer's intervention was instrumental in saving her life.
(1) Captain	A security company extended their sincere appreciation for the dedicated efforts and support of a dive-training course.
(1)Sergeant (6) Officers	Officers were commended for their diligent work which paid off in the location and apprehension of a recently released felon.
(6) Officers (2) Dispatchers	Officers and dispatchers have been commended for their outstanding performance in the rapid arrest of a bank robber and full recovery of the stolen money.
(1) Officer	Special thanks were extended to an officer that assisted with the death of a family member. The officer remained with the family beyond his duty time and was exceptional.
(2) Officers	An elderly woman expressed her appreciation of two officers that assisted her when her vehicle broke down.
(1) Detective	Thanks were received by a Detective for his participation in the National Family Violence Apprehension Detail.
(1)CSO (1) Officer	A thank you was received for making a positive difference in the street ministries and for those less fortunate than others.
(2) Officers	Two officers responded to a 911 call from an elderly gentleman who was confused. The responding officers were exceptionally courteous and gentle with the man.
(1) Civilian	A civilian employee was commended for a job well done.
(1) Detective	A commendation was received for a detective who made a clear, articulate and honest presentation on a recently released sex-offender in a community. The safety steps provided were well received by the community neighborhood
(1) Detective (5) Officers	A Detective and officers were commended for a job well done on an in-progress burglary. The officers responded quickly and obtained control of a highly volatile situation and apprehended the suspects without incident.
(1)Lieutenant (1) Detective	A citizen expressed appreciation for invaluable information that a lieutenant and detective provided at a community meeting. The lieutenant's experience and recommendations regarding an undesirable person living in the neighborhood was comforting.
(1) Detective	An international association expressed their gratitude for a successful arrest which lead to a fraud conviction.
(1) Detective	A thank you was received by a detective for providing a two-hour presentation on identity fraud.
(1)Officer	Thanks were extended to an officer that assisted out of town visitors with a personal matter.

(1) Officer	An officer performed in a professional, exemplary manner representing the Seattle Police Department on a Homeland Security matter
(2) Officers	Two officers arrived at a four-car accident scene and were professional, kind and thorough in completing their assigned tasks.
(1) Detective (3) Officers	Kudos were received for a detective and several officers for their participation in a recent basic crisis training class.
(1) Officer (1) Civilian	A national emergency management association appreciated the professional, personal and incredible assistance for their annual conference.
(1) Lieutenant (1) Sergeant (2) Officers	Accolades were provided for early and thorough documentation of exemplary investigative work.
(1) Officer	Investigative units from two law enforcement agencies assisted in apprehension of suspects involved in two armed robberies this year.
(1) Officer	A University of Washington student was stopped by an officer for a traffic infraction. The student commended the officer for making an unpleasant situation into a pleasant one.
(2) Officers	Two officers documented a suspect's irrational behavior at a scene and photographed the aftermath of the suspect's rampage. It was a well-documented investigation which resulted in an arrest.
(1) Officer	An officer played a key role when he identified and developed criteria for arrests and protocols in apprehending drug dealers.
(1) Sergeant (1) Officer	A neighborhood council member acknowledged his appreciation of on-going increased police presence and thorough regular patrols in local neighborhoods. The presence of officers has dramatically decreased criminal activity in the area.
(1) Lieutenant (1) Sergeant (5) Officers	An appreciation note was sent to the Harbor Patrol team for assisting in the rescue of a capsized boat.
(2) Officers	Two officers responded to an accidental 911 call. The citizen was distraught and the officers were kind, friendly, and respectful of the individual's dignity that evening.
(1) Officer	An officer attended a community meeting where he provided training and education to the neighborhood about current safety issues. The officer was knowledgeable, assertive, polite and confident in leading the meeting.
(1) Officer	An appreciation letter was received for the sympathetic understanding officer that responded to an incident of auto vandalism. The officer is an asset to the police department.
(1) Dispatchers (2) Operators	The communications team pulled together information on a stolen vehicle with a developmentally disabled victim inside. The victim and vehicle were recovered safely. The dispatchers and operators involved in this incident demonstrated their value to the Seattle Police Department and their community.
(2) Officers	Two officers responded promptly to a 911 car theft call. The officers were polite, expedient, professional and made an extra effort to lower the degree of anxiety of the victims with dignity and respect.
(1) Officer	An officer located our missing son who was in a psychotic state. Appreciation was extended to the officer for his kindness, expertise and the manner in which he handled the incident.
(2) Detectives	Commendations were extended to several detectives that debriefed our family in the shooting death of a family member. Thanks were given to the detectives for their accessibility and responsiveness to the incident.
(3) Officers	A local county sheriff's office commended and thanked three Seattle Police officers for their assistance in a memorial service of a slain law enforcement officer. The officer's selfless caring actions were professional and provided comfort and support to the family at the hospital and memorial services

(1) Sergeant (1) Detective (6) Officers	Accolades were provided to all involved in an investigation that concerned stolen property, drug activity and confidential informant information.
(1) Sergeant	A letter was received from a local law enforcement agency to express their appreciation when a sergeant assisted in an incident. A test and evaluation was administered to a suspect by the Sergeant and confirmed the suspect positive for drug use. The suspect was arrested and taken into custody by the Seattle Police sergeant. The sergeant's professionalism has not gone unnoticed.
(1) Officer	An officer investigated a break-in of a vehicle. The officer was kind, helpful and went out of his way to assist. He received a commendation for his thoroughness and command of the situation.
(3) Officers	A national association that met in the Seattle area commended the efforts of the officers for their outstanding and professional services.
(1) Officer	An appreciation letter was received and a citizen applauded an officer that was helpful and offered a number of suggestions upon completion of a stolen property report.
(1) Officer	A citizen was in an automobile accident and the responding officer was very efficient, compassionate and concerned. The citizen simply wished to thank the officer.
(2) Officers	Two off-duty Seattle officers assisted at an out-of-state fatality accident. The officers volunteered to handle communications and perform necessary tasks until the local police arrived. The two officers were invaluable and represented themselves and the Seattle Police Department in an exemplary manner.

November 2003 Closed Cases:

Cases involving alleged misconduct of officers and employees in the course of their official public duties are summarized below. Identifying information has been removed.

Cases are reported by allegation type. One case may be reported under more than one category.

UNNECESSARY FORCE

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged she was pushed back onto the sidewalk by the named employee after she tried to cross the street in the middle of a demonstration. She also alleged that when she was loaded into the prisoner van by an unknown employee, the door was closed on her foot.	Both the complainant and named officer agree that the complainant was not involved in the protest, but wanted to cross the street in front of a crowd of protesters to get to her apartment. The complainant and the named officer also agree that the complainant was told several times she could not enter the street, that she attempted to anyway, and was finally pushed back onto the sidewalk. When she tried again, she was arrested. The complainant and other witness officers also agree that she was uncooperative and hostile when being placed in the van. The evidence shows that the van door did hit her foot, but even the complainant and a co-arrestee agree this was minor and unintentional contact. Finding – EXONERATED (push); UNFOUNDED (van door).
Complainant alleged officers used unnecessary force on the subject during his arrest. Subject also alleged that profanity was used, and that his personal property was missing.	The subject was very intoxicated, hostile, and combative. The evidence contradicts his allegation that force was used at the precinct. Force was used by one of the named officers while the subject was being restrained at Harborview. Evidence supports the officer's version of this incident. The force was documented, screened, and

	reported. Finding – UNFOUNDED (for named officers at precinct); EXONERATED (for named officers at Harborview. As to other allegations, finding of UNFOUNDED for Conduct Unbecoming and NOT SUSTAINED for Safeguarding Property. OPA also recommended changes on policies and procedures regarding safeguarding of personal property.
Complainant alleged she was pushed from behind and had a protest sign taken out of her hand at a demonstration, causing injury to her hand from the wooden handle.	The evidence on the alleged push or shove was conflicting and did not support a finding by a preponderance of the evidence. Finding – NOT SUSTAINED. However, the evidence did support that removing the sign caused minor injury to the complainant's hand. This issue was directed for a Supervisory Referral for review of tactics and counseling.

SAFEGUARDING/MISHANDLING EVIDENCE/PROPERTY

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged that at arrest she had several items of jewelry in her possession. Upon her release from jail, the jewelry was not returned.	The evidence indicates that some type of jewelry was taken at arrest, placed into a property bag, and noted on the proper form. The jail inventory sheet does not list any jewelry, but the subject signed the form indicating it was a proper description of her property. There is no way to determine if the jewelry was taken or misplaced by police staff or jail staff. Finding – NOT SUSTAINED. OPA also recommended changes on policies and procedures regarding safeguarding of personal property.

CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged named officer used profanity during a contact with a subject on the street.	The subject did not respond to requests for contact. The named officer denies the use of profanity, and two witness officers state none was used. The complainant did not report the incident to an officer at the scene. He has now moved out of state and is not available as a witness. Finding – UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged the named officer used profanity towards him during a disturbance investigation involving the complainant's son.	The allegation was investigated. Evidence showed that profanity was used by the complainant and by the security personnel for the drinking establishment, but not by the named officer. Finding – UNFOUNDED.

Definitions of Findings:

“Sustained” means the allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Not sustained” means the allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Unfounded” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or classified, or is false.

“Exonerated” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the conduct alleged did occur, but that the conduct was justified, lawful and proper.

Referred for Supervisory Resolution.

Training or Policy Recommendation means that there has been no willful violation but that there may be deficient policies or inadequate training that need to be addressed.

“Administratively Unfounded/Exonerated” is a discretionary finding which may be made prior to the completion that the complaint was determined to be significantly flawed procedurally or legally; or without merit, i.e., complaint is false or subject recants allegations, preliminary investigation reveals mistaken/wrongful employee identification, etc, or the employee’s actions were found to be justified, lawful and proper and according to training.

“Administratively Inactivated” means that the investigation cannot proceed forward, usually due to insufficient information or the pendency of other investigations. The investigation may be reactivated upon the discovery of new, substantive information or evidence. Inactivated cases will be included in statistics but may not be summarized in this report if publication may jeopardize a subsequent investigation.

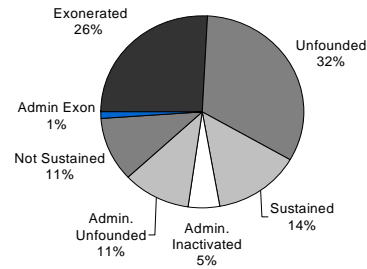
Status of OPA Contacts to Date:

2002 Contacts

	December 2002	Jan. - Dec. 2002
Contact Logs	50	573
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	11	104
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS; LI)	17	201
Cases Closed	0	184*
Commendations	27	1,416

*includes 2002 cases closed in 2003

CHART A
Dispositions of Allegations in Completed Investigations
2002 Cases
N=361 Allegations in 184 cases



2003 Contacts

	November 2003	Jan-Dec 2003
Preliminary Investigation Reports	17	408
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	3	77
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS;LI)	19	175
Commendations	100	791